

September 21, 2005

Dear Community Friends:



Tagger Graffiti

Tagger graffiti represents the majority of the graffiti on our streets today. It is not an isolated act of vandalism, but rather the visual marker of a worldwide youth oriented anti-social subculture. It is a sub-culture that says, "This is art, I can paint or write my graffiti wherever I want and you can't stop me." Many taggers are involved in other forms of youth-at-risk behavior, such as truancy, theft and drug use (usually alcohol or marijuana). Often they experience problems at home, school or with the law. Their behavior may even become compulsive or addictive.

The majority of tagging occurs between the hours of midnight and six in the morning. Taggers justify what they do by calling their graffiti an art, but going out at night alone or with others to write, paint, scratch or etch their tag on someone else's property is youth-at-risk behavior and a crime. In Seattle, it is estimated that millions of dollars are spent each year to paint out or remove graffiti.

Taggers are usually male, between the ages of ten and the late twenties. They are from all social, racial and economical classes. Many taggers are skateboarders. They may not live in the community in which they tag. Half of the taggers arrested or identified in Seattle live in outlying areas such as Everett, Kirkland, Bellevue or Tacoma. Taggers from Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose, California have been identified doing graffiti in Seattle.

The conditions that reduce or stop this destructive behavior involve:

- **Painting out or removing graffiti quickly**
- **Immediate substantial consequences for the tagger's behavior**
- **Improving the tagger's self-esteem.**

Long-term efforts by communities and families to expand a youth's positive skills, talent and motivation help reduce tagging.

Eight Ways You Can Personally Take Control Of Graffiti In Your Neighborhood:

1. If you see graffiti vandalism in progress, **call 911**. Do not attempt to apprehend the suspect yourself.
2. When graffiti appears on your home or apartment building, make a police report. Call the Seattle Police Department's non-emergency number, **206-625-5011**.
3. After police document the graffiti vandalism, remove or paint over it immediately. This will help prevent more graffiti. **For FREE paint, call 206-386-4093.**
4. Ask merchants in your neighborhood to remove graffiti from their buildings. Thank those who remove it quickly.
5. Call the Graffiti Hot Line **206-684-7587** to report graffiti on public or private property.
6. Volunteer to paint out graffiti in your neighborhood. Call **206-386-9746** for assistance.
7. Volunteer for the Adopt-A-Street program. Call **206-684-7647**.
8. Work with your chamber of commerce, community council, church or service group to make graffiti concerns known to the media, lawmakers and the courts. In the past, writing letters to the court and being present for sentencing of the tagger has been very effective.

Special thanks to Capt. Wanda Thompson (Ret.), Sgt. John Heneghan, Det. Rod Hardin, Sue Honaker and Heather McAuliffe for their work in putting this information together.

Picnic At The Precinct

We're hosting a community picnic and invite you all to attend. Please join us this coming **Saturday, September 24, 2005 1:00 - 4:00 pm, at the South Precinct - 3001 S. Myrtle ST.** Meet your local police officers, neighbors and community-based organizations. We will have fun activities for the whole family, great food, entertainment and precinct tours. You can win gift baskets, SPD memorabilia and gift certificates to local businesses. We hope to see you there!